

An Account of some Books.

I. *Prose de Signori Academici di Bologna; in Bologna, 1672*
in 4°.

THIS is a Complex of 15. Discourses, at several times made by several persons of the Illustrious Academy of *Bologna*, publish'd under the Presidentship of the Noble Count *Valerio Zani*. Though these dissertations be all ingenious and learned, each in their kind; yet we shall here chiefly take notice of the last of them (as most suitable to the design of these *Tracts*,) compos'd by the Excellent Signor *Montanari*, concerning the admirable Changes and other Novelties observ'd in the Heavens. Touching which subject the Author scruples not to affirm against the fond Maintainers of the Immutability and Incorruptibility of the Celestial Bodies, that there is not one Constellation, which serveth not for an Instance of wonderful Novelties and frequent Changes, either by the Accession of New Stars not discover'd before, or by the Extinction of some of those that had been observ'd formerly, or by increase of Light in some, or the diminution of it in others. In the proving of this Assertion he is very particular; yet so that he refers the Reader to a large Treatise, he is now preparing under the Title of the *INSTABILITIES of the FIRMAMENT*; not doubting but that he shall make it out to the Assertors of the *Incorruptibility* of these Visible Heavens, that even in the Stars anciently described there are observ'd such Changes, as would be sufficient to make *Aristotle* himself, if alive, change his opinion in this point.

Amongst the many particulars, in which this Author instanceth to make good his Affirmation, such as are the Constellations of *Andromeda*, *Perseus*, *Ursa*, *Draco*, and almost all the Northern ones, he noteth, that, having of late years found a considerable diversity in the *Pleiades*, and the numerous Stars there-about, from them as they were described by *Galilei*, he hath taken the pains of describing them anew by a Telescope of 20 palmes, (that is, about 13½ foot,) and exhibited them in this very *Tract*. Nor

Nor does he doubt, but these Changes in the Fixt Stars have been frequent in other times ; unregarded therefore because it seem'd to men too absurd, that such glorious parts of Nature, as the Heavens and Stars are, should also be subject to such vicissitudes and alterations ; as if the manifold Wisdom and Power of the Great Creator and Supreme Governor of the Universe did not as well shine forth from the one, as the other.

If it be objected, that the Appearance and Dis-appearance of those Stars may be ascribed to their Elongation from, and Proximity to our Eyes : He answers, *first*, That of all the Celestial Motions there being observ'd none but what are Circular or at least approaching to Circular, if we should think so of the Fixt Stars that appear anew, then the Plane of that Circle being over the Plane of our Eye, the Upper part of that Circle must needs be remoter from the Lower part, for Stars of the second Magnitude, more than six times at least ; that is to say, that the Star in disappearing to our Eye must be removed at least six times farther off than when it appeared brightest : In which case we must needs see that Star move in an apparent straight line, or in an Arch of a great Circle of above 19 degrees ; which is most contrary to all Observation, by which it is notorious, that none of them do recede from their apparent first place. *Secondly*, That not only in the lately mention'd *Hypothesis* of the Circle, but also supposing the Motion of such stars through a straight line passing directly over our Eye, the said distances of those Stars, six times multiplied by us, would not be sufficient to salve the *Phænomenon* of being seen for a determinate time, and then to disappear ; but it would be requisite to suppose in a manner an infinite profundity of the Stellar Sphere : an Exorbitancy not to be admitted, where no other reason urgeth to do it than the salving of such Appearances. All which he largely explaineth in his discourse ; concluding it with a Consideration, which imports, that, since Astronomers do now generally agree, that the

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Fixt Stars are, like the Sun, enobled with their own native Light; he sees no inconvenience in it to affirm, that they must also be subject to the incursions of such Spots, as the Sun is, which frequently augmenting about them do obscure, impair, or quite abscond their Light, & that sometimes for a long, sometimes for a short time, & by turns, according as the matter, of which they are made up, gathers together in great or small quantity. And therefore if such bodies upon a sudden meet about any Star, which for many ages, being free from such darkning matter, did shine very bright to us, what wonder, it should be obscured, or vanish altogether? Again, if any Star, which before had alwaies about it such a quantity of Spots, as that for a long time it was counted to be (for example) of the fourth Magnitude, do unexpectedly unvail its face, it will then shine forth and challenge possibly the place of a Star of the second or first Magnitude. Again, if any Star, having been for many ages confin'd to a dark prison among these Spots, do break Prison and show its formerly restrain'd Light; what wonder, if there appear to us a New and never before seen Star? And if by a new collection of Spots it return to its former imprisonment; what wonder, if we lose again the Splendor of it? Lastly, if one only part of the body of any Star lets out its internal lustre, and have a periodical motion about its own Center; you'll see it, no less than that of Bullialdus's in the *Whale*, appear at certain determinate times, untill a new mass of collected Spots, or a new Opening of the same do occasion an unexpected alteration.

These our Author proposes as *Possible Causes* of such Effects; remitting those, that require *Indubitable* ones, to that of *Lucan Pharsal. l. 1.*

*Querite quos agitat Mundi labor; at mihi semper
Tu, quæcunque mores tam crebros Caula meatus,
Ut Superi voluere, late ———*

So much of this Exercitation, which we consider as most proper for our purpose. As for the others, we shall but

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name some of them, *viz.* Of all sorts of Equestrian Games and Exercises ; of all sorts of Baths, and the various Entertainments therein, of the several Sects of Philosophers, and the Genuin Method of Philosophising, here esteem'd to be the Experimental way ; of the Physical Causes of the reputed Sympathies and Antipathies of things ; of Musical Intervals, and of Musick in general ; of Moral Philosophy, &c.

II. *Relation de divers Voyages Curieux, IV Partie. A Paris, 1672. in fol.*

THIS Fourth part of the Curious Voyages of the worthy M. *Thevenot* is as yet but begun, there being only printed of it and transmitted to us two Discourses, the one containing a Pourtraiture of the *Indians* by D. *Juan de Palafox*, Bishop *de la Puebla de los Angelos* ; the other being a Relation of the Voyages of N. N. into the River *della Plata* and from thence over Land into *Perou*.

Concerning the former, the said Bishop having in *New Spain* for several years exercised the Charge of Visitor and Vice-Roy as well as Bishop, and thereby acquired a perfect knowledge of the evils, which those *Indians* were made to suffer, he presented this discourse to *Philip IV.* King of *Spain*, to acquaint him with the Innocence of those people, the ill treatment they lay under, and the remedies that might be administred for it.

In describing their nature and manners, he affirms, that there can hardly be any people more humble, more gentle and less interessed ; that never are idle, but alwaies employed by the Strangers set over them ; that know no Envy ; that are very chaste except when overtaken with drink, which they are the more subject to, because they eat but little. Though they are good natured and seemingly innocent, yet, *saieth he*, they want no wit ; of which he alledgeth many Examples : Among others praiseth the sagacity, by which one of those *Indians* convinced a *Spaniard* to have stolen his Horse. For, when that *Indian* saw that the Judge, what pains
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soever he took in examining the accused party, could find no proof of the Theft, he threw his cloak over the stolne Horſes head, asking the Theif, of what Eye the Horſe was blind? The thief, being puzzled, and yet unwilling to appear mute, answer'd at random, of *the right Eye*. Whereupon the *Indian*, uncovering the Horſes head, ſaid, 'Tis plain, the Horſe is none of thine, for thou knoweſt not, that he is neither blind of the right nor of the left Eye.

Befides, he taketh notice, that there are good Muſicians amongſt them, that manage their voyce well; that play on all ſorts of Inſtruments, and ſound a Trumpet very well; that have Muſick-books in their Chappels, and Maſters of Muſick in all the Parochial Churches.

Further, he tells us, that they are very dextrous in cutting and poliſhing Pretious-ſtones, of which alſo and their virtues they are ſaid by him to be very ſkilful; as they alſo are of the virtues of Plants, whence they draw good and very ſucceſſful remedies againſt many diſeaſes and infirmities.

Again, he commends both their dexterity and courage, in that they caſt themſelves ſtark naked into the water, and getting upon the back of a Crocodile, take the opportunity, when the Beaſt opens his throat, to put a ſtick of half an Ell long betwixt his teeth, and ſo draw him with a cord, tyed to the ſtick, a ſhore, &c.

The other Diſcourſe is made by one *Acarete a Biſcayan*, who having ſailed A. 1657. from *Cadiz* to *Buenes-ayres* in the Southern *America*, about the Mouth of the River *dela Plata*, was ſent from thence over Land into *Perou*, which is above 400 Leagues; in which Voyage he made many not contemptible Obſervations. He ſtay'd ſome time at *Potoſſi*, where he ſaw the Silver-and-Gold-Mines, and aſſiſting at the magnificent ſolennity celebrated for the Birth of the Prince of *Spain*, he was an Eye-witneſs, that the Streets, where the Proceſſion paſſ'd, were paved all along with barres of Silver.

He deſcribes very exactly the Countries of *America*, he paſſ'd through; noting the Scituation of the places, the A-
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nimals and Plants to be found there, the Temperature of the Air, the Manners of the Inhabitants, their number, their wealth, and the commodities they trade in.

He observes, that about the Upper part of the river *Uruguais*, towards *Parana* and the Province of *Paraguais*, there are rich Gold-mines, discover'd by *Jesuites*; of which the Gold is much finer than that of *Perou*.

In the same Province grows an Herb call'd Herb of *Paraguais*, ordinarily given to the Mine-men afflicted by the Sulphureous and other damps of the Mines, who are recover'd by drinking the decoction thereof, which makes them vomit up with great ease whatever troubles their stomach.

In the way from *Buenos-ayres* to *Percu*, about *S. Jago del Estro*, as he met with Tigers very fierce, so he found the Lyons very gentle. About the same place he found those Animals call'd *Guanacos*, as big as Horses, with long necks, little heads, and short tails; having in their stomach the Bezoar-stone.

Speaking of the *Ostriches* abounding in that Country, he relateth a remarkable thing, which he saith he hath seen, viz. That, when that Bird is hatching her Eggs, and they are ready to hatch, she breaks four of them and carries them to the four corners of the place she is hatching in: which Eggs thus broken coming to corrupt, there is in a little time bred out of them a great quantity of worms, with which the young ones, when hatched, are fed untill they are able to go and seek for their food elsewhere, &c.

Errata in this Tract.

P. 5108. l. 2. r. *March* for *Febr.* p. 5115. l. 7. r. *Phenomena*.

L O N D O N,

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